

ROUTING SLIP

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Remarks

Executive Secretary

14 Dec 87

Date

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Office of the Director

UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20415

Executive Registry

87-3732x

December 3, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: CONSTANCE HORNER
DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Executive Mobility

Executive mobility was both a key feature in the design of the Senior Executive Service and an important selling point in the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act. Expanded mobility opportunities held the promise of promoting the development of broad perspective in our career leaders, more easily matching talent with program needs across organizations, and providing a greater range of career challenges for SES incumbents.

Based on advice from key appointed and career leaders at the Hunt Valley Conference on the Future of the SES held in 1986 and from members of the current OPM SES Advisory Board, as well as our own review of the issues, we have determined that executive mobility is an important, though underused part of the overall SES system.

We are convinced there are many SES career incumbents who, if given a wider range of job options, would welcome the challenges of managing in other program areas or agencies. A case in point is the SES mobility process set up in the Environmental Protection Agency as part of a comprehensive development program for its management resources. In the two years the mobility process has been in effect, approximately fifty career executives have voluntarily changed positions without disrupting agency operations. EPA's Administrator is very pleased with the results of this program.

The time has come to make a concerted effort to improve executive mobility within the Senior Executive Service. We remain committed to the goal of increasing inter-agency mobility, but believe that strong intra-agency executive mobility programs are a necessary building block for this to happen.

OPM will provide active leadership in revitalizing SES incumbent executive development in general and mobility in particular. To this end, I have attached guidelines on executive mobility for use in establishing or reviewing agency mobility procedures and programs in FY 1988. OPM will have a full-time mobility coordinator in the Office of Executive Personnel to work with your managers and staff in

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implementing mobility programs and promoting the sharing of information about them, as well as about job opportunities and executives interested in changing jobs.

Top level management attention and follow through by you and by us is needed for this executive mobility initiative to succeed, where others have not. I have assigned my Deputy Director to spearhead this effort for OPM. Many of you will be visited in the next few months to discuss implementation issues and will make followup visits toward the end of FY 1988.

We also want to utilize key agency leaders with experience in dealing with executive mobility. Jim Barnes, EPA's Deputy Administrator, who has provided the continuing top management involvement critical to implementing his agency's SES mobility program, has agreed to be such a resource person to OPM and other agencies. If you or one of your top executives are willing to serve in this capacity, please contact our Director of Executive Personnel, Kirke Harper, at 632-4486.

We look forward to working with you to establish mobility as a regular operating part of the Senior Executive Service system in FY 1988.

Attachment

cc: Personnel Directors

Attachment

Senior Executive Service Mobility Guidelines

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 provided a clear statutory mandate for executive mobility for the purposes of continuing development of senior executives and best accomplishing agency goals. The statute also established flexible mechanisms, including reassignment and transfer, for effecting mobility moves.

The following guidelines on executive mobility reflect this statutory base and effective human resources management practices. They are intended to promote expanded career development opportunities for SES incumbents and to provide agencies with a means of finding the best qualified career executives, filling executive vacancies quickly, combatting parochialism within program areas, and getting different perspectives on solutions to problems.

1. Mobility involves a temporary or permanent job change into another program area, organization, agency, or geographic location. It also includes temporary placement in a State or local government, an institution of higher education, a private firm, or a nonprofit organization. Any one of these kinds of change may accomplish the purposes of broadening perspective and skills and meeting organization needs.
2. Mobility programs should emphasize providing executive development opportunities for successful executives who are interested in management challenges and career growth. These programs can open up viable horizontal career path alternatives to the traditional vertical career paths within a function or organization.
3. Mobility is not required or expected of all executives, and agencies should not impose arbitrary time-in-job limits to trigger moves. Most types of programs would benefit from career executives with a broad perspective, who can deal effectively with change, complexity, and problem-solving in a wide range of situations. These qualities can be developed and enhanced through a variety of job experiences within and between agencies and outside the Federal government. However, certain research and development activities may not lend themselves to regular mobility because the activities may require a very long-term commitment by highly specialized career executives.
4. Geographic reassignments require advance consultation with the executive (5 U.S.C. 3395(a)). In addition to meeting valid agency management objectives, agencies should consider personal hardship issues including economic consequences of a move, medical factors, and impact on family. It is also desirable to provide relocation assistance for planning and accomplishing geographic moves.
5. It is recommended that executives also be consulted on reassignments within the commuting area. This does not infringe upon management's right of reassignment, but both organization and individual interests are better served through open communication and consultation on job changes.